

IDA HUSTED HARPER ON COUNCIL IN ROME

Suffrage Resolution Adopted by International Body of Women Shows that Twenty-three Countries Are Actively Engaged in Working for Equal Franchise.

By IDA HUSTED HARPER.
No. VII.

Rome, June 13.—No fact was so much in evidence at the recent great international meeting of women in Rome as the progress of the world-wide movement for the franchise. As has been related, the resolution demanding it was adopted by the representatives of twenty-three countries without one dissenting voice, and this from an organization that up to ten years ago would not even allow a committee on woman suffrage! Of these twenty-three countries, Greece and Argentina are the only ones without an association for the express purpose of obtaining the vote. To this large number must be added Portugal, which was admitted at this meeting, and Bohemia, China, Galicia, Iceland, and Roumania that belong to the International Suffrage Alliance, but not to the council. Spain, Turkey, Persia, and Japan are not organized, nor are Mexico and the Central and South American republics, but aside from this it may be said that practically all constitutionally governed countries are to a great or small degree organized to secure votes for women. Even in Java, Sumatra, Hawaii, and the Philippine Islands are groups working for this end.

Movement Encircles the Globe.

The woman suffrage movement may truly be said to encircle the globe, and so far as known it is only in the United States and Great Britain that associations of women have been formed to oppose it. This universal movement has principally taken place within the last decade, and while defeats have occurred there has not been during the time any backward or reactionary indication. The forces everywhere have rallied at once from each defeat and pressed forward with more vigor and determination. To quote the inspiring words of the international president, Mrs. Chapman Catt:

"It is reported of every land that there are more meetings, larger audiences, more speakers, more writers, more money, more influential advocates, more space in the press, more favorable editorials, more earnest supporters in Parliament, more members, more and better organization, and, best of all, more consecration."

"SILENT SIEGE" MAKES HISTORY

Suffragists' Nonrecognition by Asquith Has Telling Effect.

KING IS INACCESSIBLE

Monarch a Mere Puppet in Hands of Dominant Party, Says Clara Bewick Colby.

By CLARA BEWICK COLBY.

If the "Silent Siege" referred to in the last paper was unopposed by Parliament, it at least became a part of current history. Mr. H. G. Wells gives a chapter to it in "The New Machiavelli," and "Punch" had a series of drawings illustrating the various phases of the movement. Mr. Asquith entered the House without being recognized by the women.

From time immemorial in English history the monarch was supposed to be the protector of the people, and the humblest citizen might wait for him anywhere with a petition, which would always be received graciously. With the growth of democracy the King has become more powerless and more inaccessible, and appeals to him are always turned over to the home secretary. So, although the women now turned their attention to the King, it was Mr. Herbert Gladstone who received them, without committing himself in any way to their cause, except that he promised to convey to King Edward the women's request for an audience.

What One Woman Did.

Since then, without avail, the suffragists have endeavored in various ways to attract the attention of the King and to get the monarch to sign a declaration of women, and they never came so near accomplishing their object as a short time ago when a gentle lady of high position, in elegant court attire, and with crown jewels, formally bowed low before their majesties, and in one brief sentence pleaded that force might not be used against women. What would have happened to the British empire if the lady had been allowed to finish her sentence, one shudders to think. She was promptly removed from the royal presence (backwards, of course—what a picture!) and the country was safe. The vibrations of its throne, however, came across the water in cable dispatches describing the momentous affair. The fact that the sovereign has no longer the slightest power to protect his subjects and is only a puppet in the hands of the dominant party makes it a thousandfold more necessary than in the olden time that women should have the vote. Otherwise there is no authority on whom they can rely.

Gives Impetus to Militancy.

This foolish speech gave great impetus to the militancy of women, but in all they have done they have been careful to avoid any hint of violence. As Mrs. Philip Snowden says, "John Bull never moves till he is kicked." I have heard many Englishmen speak at the suffrage meetings, and almost without exception, they have encouraged the women in violence by referring to the dreadful things men had done to get their liberties. Not only this, but a member of the government, Mr. Hobhouse, opposed the suffrage for women because they had not shown the same zeal and determination to get it that the men did in 1832, when they burned castles and fought and killed in the streets to get their rights.

The executive board will meet in London in July to arrange for the International Suffrage Congress at Berlin in 1915.

In this connection there is one point which cannot be too strongly emphasized. With these suffrage organizations of more hundreds of thousands than can ever be counted, actively at work all over the world, there is just one that has ever broken a law or done an unconstitutional act, a minority society in one country and only a few hundred of its members implicated in actual deeds of violence. Yet because of these there is an effort to hold the suffragists of the whole earth responsible and prove the unfitness of all women to vote. These "militants" do not belong to the International Suffrage Alliance or to the International Council of Women; they affiliate with no other association and despise ordinary procedure. They have not wrecked the forty years' work of the National British Suffrage Association, and it was a great pleasure to learn from its delegates to the recent council in Rome that favorable public sentiment there is increasing and that the press is modifying its hostility toward the enfranchisement of women. They believe that a new government, whatever its politics, will grant at least a limited parliamentary vote. There are no women anywhere so well organized as those of Great Britain, so well informed on public questions, so methodical, so capable of conducting a meeting according to rules of order, so thorough in printed reports; but their splendid effort goes unnoticed, at least by other countries, because all the newspaper space that can be spared is given to the violent acts of a few women driven to desperation.

A Case in Point.

A case in point is that of the British National Council and Union of Women Workers, begun in 1885 and formally organized in 1895. It is composed of 155 national societies, among them the Constitutional Suffrage Associations, temperance societies, women's colleges in Oxford, Cambridge, and London, Young Women's Christian Association, women's local government societies, teachers' associations, social work department of the Salvation Army, etc., with 1,431 divisions. This council is unquestionably the greatest civic and social force in Great Britain, and this entire article would not be long enough merely to enumerate the lines of work—watching every bill before Parliament relating to the interests of women and children and insisting on needful changes; obtaining the appointment of women on public boards and as inspectors of various kinds; looking after the hours, wages, and conditions of wage-earning women; observ-

ing all legislation relating in any way to the social evil; improving the facilities of the public schools; securing better laws of sanitation and hygiene. For twenty years this great organization, with thousands of members, has worked through committees, publications, and mass meetings for the welfare of the nation, led in every community by its ablest women.

The position of this vast and representative body on the question of woman suffrage must certainly be regarded as significant and important. At the beginning it was a forbidden subject, but by 1902 the futility of their work without the power to elect the lawmakers had become so apparent that at their annual meeting this resolution was adopted: "Without the firm foundation of the parliamentary franchise there is no permanence for any advance gained." This was reaffirmed year after year by a majority of three-fourths, and in 1912 was supplemented by a demand on Parliament that no electoral franchise bill should be passed which did not include women.

Mrs. Humphrey Ward's Views.

Mrs. Humphrey Ward, president of the Anti-Suffrage Society, which belonged to this National Council, then concluded that it was time to get busy. There was absolutely no hope of putting through an anti-suffrage resolution, and so at the annual meeting of 1913 she threw the weight of her influence in favor of a proposition that hereafter the council should pass no resolutions on any subject. This was strongly opposed by Mrs. Fawcett, president of the National Suffrage Association, and others, and received only twenty-three votes in favor. Mrs. Ward then endeavored to get through a proposal that five affiliated societies should have power to veto the adoption of a resolution, and, in a speech of several thousand words, pointed out that this National Council was already regarded by the public as a suffrage association, and said that if her resolution was not adopted the Anti-Suffrage Society should feel obliged to withdraw. She was able to muster only forty-four votes, and so she took her doll rags and went home, or, in other words, the Anti-Suffrage Society of 127 members went out of the National Council. Hereafter it will flock by itself in Great Britain, just as, for obvious reasons, its only coadjutor flocks in the United States.

The National Council of Women of Canada, formed in 1897, plays as prominent a part in the civic and social affairs of the Dominion as does the one referred to above as those of Great Britain. It is composed of nearly twenty national and about two hundred local organizations, and it carries on its work through nineteen standing

its Supreme Court judges are owned like slaves in other words, it is business men, all are owned."

Her vote has never brought prohibition in a single State, yet ten States have driven out the liquor traffic by the votes of men only. While woman suffrage has helped cities like Denver to keep "wide open" every day in the week, it has actually forced cities having a majority of women, like Pasadena and Santa Monica, Cal., not only to get wet, but to sell liquor night and Sunday. Wyoming has had woman suffrage for forty-four years without one county going "dry."

Want More Than Votes.

But experiences like these do not deter the woman radical from asking nationwide sanction of her "cause." In fact, she asks not only that her past vote record be ignored, but tells us plainly that she will not be "small fraction" of the feminine demand. Here are some of the others:

Mrs. Gustave D. Ogden, suffragist leader and member of the Cincinnati, Ohio, Women's Suffrage Association, writes a foreword to "Let's Civilize the Marriage Laws," by Richard D. Kethrens, calling it a "new and regenerating gospel" and saying that "this is the gospel of good to society and the race."

"When a boy and a girl, under natural conditions, avow their love for each other, they are bound to marry, and by that fact to perpetuate the race, and without the necessity of a public declaration, the recital of prescribed formulas, or other meaningless ceremony, their union is complete. This is the natural and proper order of things. The institution of reciprocal love alone constitutes the real marriage; all else is foreign, non-essential—pretty, but empty formality." Mrs. Ogden declares:

"I am giving this book the benefit of my unqualified endorsement because in my judgment it means more for the emancipation of women and the upbuilding of the race than all the books hitherto written, and it is meant to help carry its saving philosophy to every home in America."

And Miss Gertrude Atherton tells us in the Yale Review, "Women more than men are the victims of the law. They are the bit between their teeth and enjoyed, individually or as a group, something like license; but never collectively, at least in the middle class. Today they are being taught to live by a code of morals as to keep her body housed and fed." Of the young women who move to "Western towns in search of lowered pressure and higher wages" in suffrage States, of course she says: "They live practically the same lives as the unattached men (generally in company of the attached), and are the despair of the State, for they are not content with enjoying life precisely as men enjoy it, and with no call for the subterfuges forced upon girls at home. 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